

# Match and Lighter Safety

Office of the  
State Fire Marshal  
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/firemars.htm>



*A guide for the careful storage of matches and lighters and prevention of firesetting by children.*

*Firesetting by children is a problem that needs immediate attention. In Washington State, children with access to ignition devices set fires that took 21 lives during 1998-2003. The victims of these fires are the children themselves and their family members. Other victims of intentionally set fires include schools and wildlands.*

## 1 Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Most children set fires out of curiosity. Others are reactionary, because they are upset and need attention.

- ☐ Controlling access to matches, lighters, and other materials that can start fires is critical. Store matches and lighters in locked containers, out of sight and out of reach. Teach children if they find matches or lighters to tell an adult.
- ☐ Increase supervision of children. Track your child's activities. Ask yourself, "Is my child adequately supervised? Are there ways I can provide more supervision?"

## 2 Getting Help – Regardless of how severe the firesetting behavior, you can get help

- ☐ Firestoppers Network of Washington is a group dedicated to firesetting issues in 13 of Washington's 39 counties. For information about the Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Coalition nearest you contact the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0435 or e-mail [karen.jones@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:karen.jones@wsp.wa.gov). For information on line visit: <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/juvenile/juvenile.htm>
- ☐ Workbooks – The publications listed below are available for use with families of children who have been involved with firesetting. These workbooks have been developed to meet the need for effective education tools for kids who misuse fire. For more information contact Arson Alarm Foundation at 206-264-3330.
  - [A Family's Response to Firesetting](#), information for caregivers;
  - [A Workbook for Kids About Fire](#), aimed at the older child and adolescents;
  - [A Kid's Fire Safety Workbook](#), developed for younger children.

## 3

### If you Smoke

- ☐ Put lighters and matches away after each use.
- ☐ Ashtrays – Use large deep non-tip ashtrays and empty them often.
- ☐ Check for embers – before leaving a room, check in and around the furniture for hot embers, ashes, butts or matches.
- ☐ Never smoke in bed or when drowsy or when on medications that can cause drowsiness.

**Reference:** *A Family's Response to Firesetting*, 1997 Firestoppers of Washington,; National Fire Protection Association, "Match and Lighter Fire Safety" [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)